



Couple explores brave new world

MAY 07, 2009

SECTION: NEWS

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Two University of Wollongong academics have shone the spotlight on the incredible and frightening possibilities new technologies are bringing into the world and the effects they might have or be having on human rights and our relationships.

Doctors M.G. Michael and wife Katina Michael have been working as husband and wife for the best part of a decade, but it has only been recently that Katina's technological expertise and her husband's ethical and philosophical background have been able to combine for a common goal.

"It was only after we became academics we saw an opportunity to work together and increasingly there's been a lot of interest from citizens around the globe about where we (as humans) are headed with the widespread application of automatic identification technology," she said.

One of the things the pair explore in their new book, Innovative Automatic Identification and Location-Based Services: From Bar Codes to Chip Implants, is the way relationships can be affected by technologies (such as GPS-enabled mobile phones) that can track a person's movements.

"All these innovations are adding a new dimension to relationships and trust," Katina said. "They could be possibly eroding ethical codes like trust in a relationship."

The Michaels also discuss technology embedded inside people.

Katina said just because it was under your skin it didn't mean it couldn't be tampered with.

She said that though these technologies bring with them many benefits, it doesn't mean that we must not engage with some of the negative fall-out.

"We have to really be careful that our ability to innovate doesn't surpass our ability to question the innovations we are creating," she said.

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